

REMARKS

Claims 17-36 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, the specification is amended; Figure 7 is corrected; and claims 17, 21, 30-32 and 34 are amended. No new matter is added. In view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; (d) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (e) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

The courtesies extended to Applicant's representative by Examiner Inoa at the interview held April 27, 2004, are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicant's record of the interview.

I. The Claims Satisfy All Formal Requirements

The Office Action objects to claims 17, 21, 31, 32 and 34 for informalities. In response, the claims are amended to obviate the objection. Withdrawal of the objection to the claims is respectfully requested.

II. The Specification Satisfies All Formal Requirements

The Office Action objects to the substitute specification of March 3, 2004 under 35 U.S.C. §132 asserting that the substitute specification introduces new matter into the

disclosure. In response, paragraphs 27 and 29 of the specification are amended to obviate the objection. Withdrawal of the objection under 35 U.S.C. §132 is respectfully requested.

III. The Drawings Satisfy All Formal Requirements

A correction to Fig. 7 was submitted with the March 3 Amendment. A replacement drawing sheet which formalizes the change to Fig. 7 is attached herein. Acceptance of the replacement drawing sheet is respectfully requested.

IV. The Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph

The Office Action rejects claims 17, 21, 22, 30 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding claims 17 and 30, the Office Action asserts that "maximum number of combinable words" is unclear. This assertion is respectfully traversed. Notwithstanding the assertion, the number of physical segments as claimed is based on a maximum number of combinable words. Support for this claimed feature is found at least at paragraph [0048] through [0050] of the substitute specification. Accordingly, claims 17 and 30 are amended to clarify the supported claim features.

Regarding claims 21 and 31, the Office Action asserts that "and which are searched for a match" is unclear. This assertion is respectfully traversed. Notwithstanding the Office Action's assertion, each of the plurality of one-word circuits are searched for a match between the stored data and the search data, as now recited in claims 21 and 31. The support for the claimed features may be found at least at paragraphs [0050] and [0051] of the substitute specification. Claims 21 and 31 are amended to clarify the supported claim features.

For at least the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the claims are clear and particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, is respectfully requested.

V. The Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 17-36 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent 6,553,453 to Gibson et al. ("Gibson") in view of U.S. Patent 6,611,445 to Kanazawa et al. ("Kanazawa"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Kanazawa is not available as "prior art" against this application. Specifically, the U.S. filing date of the present application (December 27, 2001) precedes the earliest date for which Kanazawa is available as a reference (February 26, 2002). Thus, the prior art rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is improper. Please also note that Kanazawa is assigned to Kawasaki Microelectronics, Inc., which assignee is the common assignee for both Kanazawa and the present application. See 35 U.S.C. §103(c).

Furthermore, even if Kanazawa is applicable, Gibson and Kanazawa, individually or in combination, do not teach, disclose or suggest "a logical-segment-to-physical-segment converting circuit for converting logical-segment-to-be searched signal that indicates a position of words to be searched to the physical-segment-to-be-searched instruction signal according to the setting of said entry configuration set means," as recited in claim 17, and as similarly recited in claim 30. Kanazawa's converter is word based, but does not convert based on segments, or groups of CAM words.

The Office Action at page 4 admits that "Gibson et al. does not teach a logical-segment-to-physical-segment converting circuit."

Kanazawa discloses a logical-word-to-physical-word converter, but Kanazawa does not disclose a logical-segment-to-physical-segment converting circuit, as recited in claims 17 and 30.

Claims 17 and 30 would not have been rendered obvious by Gibson in view of Kanazawa. Claims 18-29 depend from claim 17, and claims 31-36 depend from claim 30, and thus, claims 18-29 and 31-36 also would not have been rendered obvious by Gibson in

view of Kanazawa. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 17-36 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:RJK/can

Attachment:
Replacement Sheet

Date: August 20, 2004

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